

November 29, 2010

Director Mark W. Cowin
Calif. Dept. of Water Resources
1416 Ninth Street Room 1115-1
Sacramento, CA 94814

Dear Director Cowin:

I am very upset to learn that the Delta Cross Channel Gates were not closed for 14 days in early October as requested by the fishery agencies, East Bay MUD and the salmon stakeholders. This closure would have allowed the returning Mokelumne River adult salmon to reach their spawning grounds. With the Cross Channel Gates open at this critical time, the heavy flows through the gates attract the salmon through the gates and into the Sacramento River instead of letting them find their native Mokelumne River. By denying this request, DWR has been a willing party to the destruction of up to six million salmon smolts which would have been hatched in the Mokelumne River and the Mokelumne salmon hatchery.

The fall run salmon populations of the Central Valley have been decimated in the last seven years in part by the DWR water movement policies which have destroyed their spawning and migrating habitats. The crash has been the largest crash of any salmon population ever in the United States. It crashed 97% from 1,490,000 adults in 2002 to 39,500 in 2009. Your actions or inactions have destroyed the salmon fishing industry, created thousands of job losses and deprived the California public of the opportunity to catch or eat these highly desirable fish.

I understand that by law, DWR has as much obligation to change flows to restore the Delta and save salmon as it does to pump water. The Cross Channel Gates Project was an opportunity to make a large difference in the salmon populations at almost no cost to the state, federal government or other water users. Without your support of projects like this, I believe DWR is hastening the day these fish will either be listed by the Endangered Species Act or they will be extinct. There are very few opportunities to save the salmon that are this easy.

I also understand that several weak reasons were given for denying the full gates closure program mainly involving water quality in the Delta. I am told that no consideration was given to minor cutbacks in export pumping which would have solved the salinity problem and allowed the gates to be closed.

In summary, I am very disappointed in DWR. I am sending a copy of this letter to my Assemblyman, State Senator and the Delta Stewardship Council. If DWR is not going to voluntarily follow the law and help recover these fish, I feel the DWR and those making the anti fish decisions should be penalized. I would appreciate hearing your response.

Yours Truly,



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cc: Diane Feinstein, Barbara Boxer
Alyson Huber
→ Mr. Phil Isenberg, Chair, Delta Stewardship Council
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